

Message Text

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EXDIS

NOFORN

FROM US REP MBFR

E.O.: 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, NATO

SUBJ: MBFR: REPORT OF DISCUSSION BETWEEN SOVIET AND US

REPS JANUARY 31, 1974

1. ON THE MORNING OF JANUARY 31, US REP ASKED SOVIET REP KHLESTOV WHETHER SOVIETS WOULD BE INTERESTED IN PURSUING FURTHER THE ISSUE OF INFORMAL DISCUSSION GROUPS WHICH HAD BEEN DISCUSSED WITH US REP JANUARY 29. KHLESTOV INDICATED SOVIETS WOULD BE INTERESTED IN DOING SO.

2. US REP AND US DEPREP MET WITH KHLESTOV AND SMIRNOVSKY FOLLOWING PLENARY SESSION JANUARY 31. US REP ASKED KHLESTOV IF HE HAD FURTHER CONSIDERED POINTS RAISED BY US REP IN THE CONVERSATION OF JANUARY 29 CONCERNING WESTERN DESIRE TO RAISE SOME POINTS OF INTEREST FOR THE NEGOTIATIONS IN SMALL
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INFORMAL MULTILATERAL SETTING AND WHETHER KHLESTOV HAD ANYTHING TO ADD ON THE SUBJECT.

3. KHLESTOV SAID HE HAD BEEN THINKING ABOUT THE

TOPIC, BUT THAT ALL THAT HE COULD SAY NOW WAS THAT HE CONTINUED TO FEEL THAT BILATERAL CONTACT WAS A BETTER WAY OF DISCUSSION NEGOTIATING ISSUES THAN MULTILATERAL INFORMAL MEETINGS BECAUSE OF THE FLEXIBILITY BILATERALS PROVIDED FOR THE PARTICIPANTS ON BOTH SIDES. KHLESTOV REITERATED HIS VIEW, PUT FORWARD IN THE JANUARY 29 CONVERSATION, THAT IN MULTILATERAL TALKS THE SOVIETS WOULD BE OBLIGED TO TAKE POSITIONS FOR THE RECORD.

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HE SAID US REP HAD ALREADY MENTIONED SUBJECT OF A POSSIBLE PROCEDURAL UNDERSTANDING TO SOVIETS, AND SOVIETS WOULD PREFER TO HEAR US VIEWS ON THE WHOLE SUBJECT BEFORE GOING ON TO DISCUSS IT IN A MULTILATERAL FORUM. IN BILATERALS WITH THE U.S., A DEGREE OF CONFIDENTIALITY AND POSSIBILITY FOR INFORMAL, NON-COMMITTING PERSONAL COMMENT HAD BEEN DEVELOPED. IN MULTILATERALS, WITH OTHERS PRESENT FROM BOTH SIDES, HE COULD ONLY TAKE THE OFFICIAL SOVIET POSITION.

END EXDIS/NOFORN.

4. US REP SAID HE UNDERSTOOD KHLESTOV'S POINT. BUT EVEN TAKING IT FULLY INTO ACCOUNT, HE CONSIDERED IT STILL MORE IMPORTANT THAT OTHER WESTERN ALLIES BE PRESENT FOR DISCUSSION OF THE SUBJECTS HE HAD IN MIND, EVEN THOUGH THE GROUP WOULD OF COURSE BE RESTRICTED IN SIZE TO PROMOTE INFORMAL EXCHANGE. US REP SAID IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT OTHER WESTERN ALLIES PARTICIPATE BECAUSE THEIR INTERESTS WERE INVOLVED. HE HOPED IN ANY EVENT THAT SOVIETS WOULD WISH TO HEAR WHAT ALLIES HAD TO SAY ON ANY ISSUE OF POSSIBLE SIGNIFICANCE FOR THE NEGOTIATIONS WHENEVER THE OPPORTUNITY WAS PRESENTED, AND WOULD WISH TO KEEP AN OPEN MIND ON WHAT THEY WOULD HEAR AND JUDGE WESTERN VIEWS ON THEIR OWN MERIT.

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5. AFTER SIDE DISCUSSION WITH SMIRNOVSKY, KHLESTOV AGREED ON THE MULTILATERAL FORMAT IN THE FORM OF A SOCIAL OCCASION WITH THREE REPRESENTATIVES ON A SIDE BUT CAUTIONED THAT A PRICE WOULD HAVE TO BE PAID FOR THIS ARRANGEMENT IN TERMS OF FLEXIBILITY OF SOVIET REACTION TO WESTERN IDEAS, WHATEVER THEIR NATURE. IT WAS AGREED TO MEET ON THE EVENING OF FEBRUARY 7 AND THAT THE SOVIETS WOULD WISH TWO FURTHER PACT REPRESENTATIVES WHOSE NAMES THEY WOULD SUPPLY LATER TO BE INVITED.

BEGIN EXDIS/NFORN:

6. COMMENT: WE BELIEVE THE SOVIETS WERE MOTIVATED

BOTH BY DESIRE FOR INFORMAL BILATERAL DISCUSSION WITH
U.S., AND BY CONCERN OVER COMPLICATIONS WITH THE
ROMANIANS IF THE DISCUSSION TOOK ON MULTILATERAL
CHARACTER. ALTHOUGH WE WOULD HAVE RECEIVED FRANKER
REACTION IN BILATERAL DISCUSSION AND PERHAPS GOTTEN FURTHER
IN OBTAINING GOOD RECEPTION FOR OVERALL WESTERN TACTICAL
APPROACH, WE BELIVED IT MORE IMPORTANT TO HAVE ALLIES
PRESENT ON FIRST PRESENTATION OF WESTERN CLARIFICATIONS.
END COMMENT.

END EXDIS/NOFORN.HUMES

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